

BOOKS & LIFE

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE


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Books and Life

Brief Studies

BY

WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



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BOOKS AND LIFE.

BRIEF STUDIES.

UNHAMPERED.

I WILL not be hampered. Nothing shall encroach upon me ; this I set down as my final declaration of independence for the soul. Now, that word soul I cling to with loving tenacity, doing so because the word expresses truth, and whole truth, and wipes away with a single brush of the hand a hundred tawdry sophistries the materialists have covered our thinking with, thick

“As dust in vacant chambers,”

not proving so much as asserting that our bodies are masters. I hate that lie.

I fairly smoke in my passion against it. I have my body, but am not my body. For which reason I am fond to fervidness of this word "soul," because thereby is expressed my spirituality as opposed to my physicality. Browning's saying,

"Nor soul helps body more than body soul," is open to exception, but contains the antithesis of body and soul in illuminative statement. If I should die, body stays, soul goes; in other words, I go. My soul is I. We are elemental substances.

In saying, then, "I will not be hampered," my meaning clearly is, I will let nothing interfere with the rights of my soul. My transcendent rights nothing shall touch. If a dog runs

barking across my path and snaps at my knees in passing, I can not help that; if a blackguard is foul in speech regarding me, I can not prevent that; if a foul wind blows its stench in my face, I can not unload the wind of foulness; if a storm grips me in its vortex and maims me for life, no fault attaches to me; I am not blamed. I am not touched, in truth. These things have not reached *me*, even as an attacking column storming a mediæval castle, when the moat was crossed, found the fortress still defended by barbican and tower and burly wall. The unhinderable things happen to body, not to soul. The soul is free. Air is not so free. I will give myself elbow-room. I will stand on meadow or mountain, or on

cliff fronting the sea; in short, will stand where I will. No one can hinder me. God has given soul, freedom, and room. These are its treasures and inheritance. These rights endure.

This I find to be the hardship; namely, to make the soul feel its freedom. To know one's self free and to feel one's self free are not identical. Feeling goes deep like mountain roots. Feeling becomes part of our equipment. Who feels himself pusillanimous, is pusillanimous; who feels himself of substantial worth and dignity, has dignity no poor slights can scratch and make to bleed. Feel the soul is free, and let nothing encroach upon its territory. I have seen butterflies when chased unfold their wings and fly from

danger. This is not the soul's method; for, like the landholder who stands upon his own premises and warns intruders off, so self is. Proprietary rights need asserting, sometimes defending, but in all cases are to be maintained. Let the soul know this. By thinking himself a genius, a man does not become one; nor by thinking himself rich does he become a millionaire; but by knowing that he does not belong to earth, but earth to him,—by knowing, in fine, his birthright, there come a primacy of soul and regality of spirit and conduct fitting manhood. A lion thinks he owns the desert; all besides he deems intruders. Let my life know it owns things and is not owned by things; that this world is its play-

ground, vineyard, battlefield. How central in importance such an idea of self is! You do not beg, you ask; you do not cower, you stand; you do not maunder, you speak; you do not flee, but give battle and prevail. I will not be hampered. I will, like eagles, keep to the cliff and the sky. I will keep room for wings and aspirations and expeditions.

When Nansen would dig through ice-fields of the farthest North, he disallied himself from his former world, left it far behind him, acclimated himself to the new conditions. His was a voyage — a discovery, an addition. Finally he cut himself off from the good ship *Fram*. He must be free. He and another walked into the face of an

unknown, foreboding world of ice and night. He fairly enlarged the limits of physical endurance. His freedom was father to his venture and his daring grew out of a self-reliant soul. Not otherwise than this must soul always be. Keep an unhindered life. To let daily routine encroach on self is suicide. Keep the soul free. Let it do, but let it be free to do. Give it captaincy. Let the soul be as the general who, while the soldiers carry out maneuvers and shock like human avalanches, himself stands apart, placid, with superabundant energies unflagged. Souls die, not from labor, but from infringement. We are so much more than all we do. Souls need not grow dusty because the roads are dry with summer's

drought. Because the world is round us, we need not be monopolized. All labor is compatible with strict and holy privacy with God.

All of which I mean in insisting I will not be hampered, and making it the motto of my life, I fly with mine own wing.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

“THE Rime of the Ancient Mariner” is the weirdest poem in our language, unless Poe’s “Raven” or “Ulalume” or “The City of the Sea” be excepted. No English poet has dreamed so wild a dream, that is certain. Browning’s “Caliban” is remote from the highway of literature in conception, so remote as to have no friend in all the wide land of poetry, a study at once profound and fathomless in interest and in philosophical insight; but we could not feel it weird. It is like gnarled volcanic crags, twisted and scarred. “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” is eerie. It

makes your flesh creep. You feel the ghosts, and do not wonder the wedding guest piped shrill as wind blowing through the ship's rigging

“Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!”

That gray-beard loon holds the wedding guest and the rest of us with his glittering eye. For myself, I never am quit of him. His eyes eat into my heart. “The raven, never flitting, never flitting,” may yet leave the bust above my door; but the ancient mariner never lifts his glittering eye from my face, nor lets me slip back into my composure as before. To read the poem is to take ship into seas and zones and thoughts that company with one all his days.

As a rule, I take it, this poem, so

unique as to stand practically insular, islanded in the genius of that dreamy opium-eater, goes as a bewildering piece of imagination, lawless as genius has good right to be. And that Coleridge had any purpose in the poem is not here suggested. That is precisely what he did not have. But so saying is not saying no meaning is to be dragged from the deep depths of this strangest poem of an incomprehensible man. Poets are men caught in the currents of their own imagination, and borne they know not whither. In a regal poem, there is nothing mechanical. It blazes like a sun, nor shows the sources of its light. The witchery of this poem is this very thing. As it ran away with the poet who wrote, so

it runs away with us who read it. An ecstatic lawlessness runs through the poem's veins. What the wonder is you can not light on; but the wonder is. Than that, nothing is more certain. Read in youth, or first manhood, or maturer manhood, in nothing has the poem changed as regards its power to carry us away as if borne on an albatross's wings. The old, first, weird wonder stays and controls. Our reason takes laudanum. We shift along wide reaches of becalmed sea, or sit calm as the becalmed waters. The mariner hath us in his hands to do with us what he will. Always this quality of fascination keeps an undimmed eye.

But a tempest meaning nothing, being blind as stormy midnights, may

teach a lesson. A tempest does teach a lesson. The tempest preys on the unprepared. A tempest finds the weak spot out. No tempest is meaningless, but neither has it any reason. Blind, it has sight and learning. So is "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Its meaning, I will venture, is the irrevocableness of the past. You can not undo the thing done. You can not (to falter in poor Richard's words),

"Ravel out my weaved-up folly."

Is this not a tremendous lesson? The past can not be undone. Doors shut can not be opened, nor can you retrace a path. Can these things be true? Ask the mariner, who shot the albatross. No sorrow of his could undo that piece of thoughtless folly. The becalmed

ship, the sailors dying of thirst with horrid curses in their eyes, and the mariner with the dead albatross about his neck where once he wore the cross,—these were the torrid heats that burn his soul dry as ashes. He had been thoughtless; that was all. He had meant no ill when he aimed his good crossbow at the bird of good omen. He was a roysterer; a thoughtless riot in his arm and bow, and the ill is done beyond repair. The ship becalmed, the sailors dead to the last man, the helmsman at the helm, the ship to sink in the harbor when the pilot comes with boy and boat to bring the ship to wharf; and only the mariner survives, decreed to tell his story to such as are qualified to hear it, and then dash on and find

another. The lesson must be taught. The irrevocable past. Repentance could not change the deed. Tears were futile. Prayers could bring heart's ease, but could not man the ship with life nor bring the sailors home again.

Withal, the spectral ship sailing upon a sea becalmed, and through whose sides you looked as through prison bars against the sun; that ship on which rode horrid Death and Life-in-Death, man and woman casting dice, she calling,

“The game is done! I ’ve won!”—

this ship is not more spectral than the meaning of the “Rime.”

The mariner could slay the albatross, but could not bring him back to life; his carelessness could slay his fellow seaman, but he could bring no least nor

greatest back to breath and motion. Nothing availed. He lived, if it were worth the while to call that life which was only the interruption of the wedding festival by the telling of a tale full of all distress, and for which there was not any cure. Once done, the deed stands for evermore; God can forgive, but can not undo it. Hence, my heart, do right that shall not need undoing. This is thy wisdom and thy life.

READING.

READING is the chief instrument of culture in reach of the many. Extended or culture-giving travel is not possible for the majorities, but must remain the possession of the minorities. Nor is contact with the makers of history the opportunity of many. The personal touch with the living actor is the rare privilege of few. To see Tennyson and hear him read the "Passing of Arthur" or the lyrics in the "Medley;" to be associated with such an illustrious spirit as Browning and have entrance through the postern gate to the secrets of his semi-Shakespearean thought; to be closeted with Gladstone;

to hold colloquy with the creator of the German Empire; to have the confidence of a Blaine; to hear Hawthorne tell the story of the "Scarlet Letter;" to sit at meat with the authors of "Henry Esmond" and of "The Tale of Two Cities,"—these must always be the delight of the few spirits; and from such the many must be perpetually barred.

But by reading, we come to be the intimates of the great spirits of the world. The voice, the laughter, the jest, the boyish delight, the rollicking spirit of Charles Dickens, through Forster and Fields, become a part of our apparent experience. We know through books persons we have not met, nor seen, nor heard, as we do not know our neighbors and friends. The doings

of statesmen and diplomats are the property of the world; and their careers are photographed before our eyes. "A good book," to use the old but deathless phrase of Milton, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit." In other words, the author has pressed from his veins the express wine of his life. All the vigor which made him the man he was, he poured as a libation at our feet or emptied into our cup.

"Books are drenched sands
On which a great soul's wealth lies, all in
heaps,
Like a wrecked argosy,"

is a description as accurate as beautiful. The opulence of Shakespeare, the majesty of Milton, the fecundity of thought and expression of Burke,—all are piled at our feet like an offering to

a god. We are by reading entered into all men's labors. The Platos and Emersons toil in our field, and bring their harvests into the garner of every man, however unknown or unobserved.

Reading, then, is the open door into the great life of the world. Through it we know the history of forgotten centuries and become the intimates of immortal spirits. It is the pre-eminent instrument of culture, and, because of this unique pre-eminence and worth, is an important subject of consideration. Bacon has told us that "Reading makes a full man." It cultivates, gives stores of knowledge, supplies background to figure, puts a man with his back against the centuries and his face fronting all the future. He has taken history into

his constitution, so that it is as if a man had lived from the world's morning to this high noon. It is the knowledge thus supplied which, properly considered, destroys individual insularity and creates a man a cosmopolitan.

Reading should be magnified as an art. The teacher of English literature should be a professor of books. He is an exponent of bibliography, but should not simply tell *what*, but *how*; not only that this, and this, and that are worthy of perusal, but how they may be read with the greatest economy of time and intellectual force. His office is not simply to give a catalogue of tomes nor yet simply to open and give sight of the title-page or table of contents; but, in addition, to tell the student how he

may best avail himself of their hid treasures. This is reading as an art. Life being brief, books being an interminable catalogue, the world's library having grown so great as to dwarf the ancient *cellam penariam* of Alexandria, if there be any discoverable means of initiation into these more than Eleusinian mysteries the student has a right to demand it. This key belongs to him by infeasible right. The teacher will let the student into certain secrets, among them being the following:

1. *He must skim the newspapers.* To read them is an intellectual sin. To the daily paper he should not give more than fifteen to twenty minutes (and should read but one, it being thoroughly

representative as a news-giver, giving the reader a view of the earth, since it is a recorder of contemporaneous history good and bad, and, in consequence, a window opening from our attic into the world, and should give one, day by day, a view of the doings of the entire planet). This paper should be an advocate of those political principles to which the reader gives allegiance.

2. He may read *Public Opinion* for the purpose of giving him catholicity of view, a thorough acquaintance with political opinion other than his own. It will also give him the drift of discussion in sociology, theology, literature, and such like.

3. Read one distinctively literary

journal. This will give him familiarity with scholarly views of books and literary measures.

4. The *Review of Reviews* for a consecutive view of history of our own time, the *résumé* of leading articles from all cisatlantic and transatlantic periodicals.

5. Read a Church paper—your own Church paper—to give your heart a generous religious view.

6. Read book catalogues. This familiarizes with literature as nothing else can do. Holmes, in words bringing a quick response from every book-lover, declares in the "Autocrat" that the coming man, "above all, must have tumbled about in a library." Reading catalogues is the nearest approach to the

thing itself. It is well to have a standing order with the leading publishers for their annual catalogues. Reading the bulletin of private libraries offered for sale is profitable, showing a greater variety of books than can actually be found even in the list of historic publishing-houses. The catalogue of "A Model Library of Five Thousand Volumes," as issued by the American Library Association and published by the Educational Bureau is highly valuable and a *vade mecum* to the reader. But by all these means a love of books, a thing much to be coveted, and a fraternity with them, will be fostered. To be able to find one's self when turned into a great library is an accomplishment well worth striving for; and to look

upon books as friends, well beloved, and dead authors as members of our own inner circle of intimates is a noble consummation.

No mention is here made of certain types of reviews, because they have ceased to be makers of sentiment and have come to be followers, the "star system" of writing rarely producing literature or articles well worth studying. Nor have the magazines been included. It is my belief that the plethora of periodical literature is detrimental to the formation of the genuine literary spirit. Youth needs books. He needs great books. Magazines give him a sort of paraphrased paragraph taste. He wants reading in homeopathic doses; whereas he sorely needs

the intellectual invigoration infallibly connected with the closeting himself with an author and following him through the mazes of his argument to the end. The magazine devotee is not liable to become a reader of books. He loves a frequent change of literary diet. I would urge more reading of books, even to the comparative exclusion of magazines. A final observation on reading in general is requisite, that these remarks on the requisition of reading may be relatively complete. That observation is this: *Learn to read rapidly and skim books.* Macaulay was an adept in this art. So was Lowell. The old order of reading but few books, as preached by Hobbes and Spinoza, it is safe to affirm, is past.

We have long passed the strictly orig-
inative period of the world's intellectual
life; and he who would teach man must
be, to a pronounced extent at least, a
redistributor. This necessitates a vast
acquaintance. It was said of Dean
Stanley that "he numbered more
friends gathered from all classes and
climes than perhaps any other man in
his day." Some such necessity as this
is upon us. We must have wide liter-
ary acquaintanceship. It was declared
that for years Lowell did scarcely any-
thing but read. To the end that the
busy man or woman read much, he
must read rapidly. He can not drone
over his task. The misconception is
current that if a man be slow he is thor-
ough, if he haste he is superficial, than
which nothing could be more incorrect.

Gauge rather your intellectual grip inquiring, "In how much briefer time can I accomplish a given task than in former years?" A man may accelerate his thought process. He must take knowledge as the eye does landscapes. Rapid reading is a double process, thought and visual. A laggard thought will make slow reading necessary. The constant goading of thought will in most cases be required to make a rapid reader. But a second factor appears in a philosophic skimming process, and this is *selecting*. Finding in an author a fact or a series of facts with which one is entirely familiar, he passes this over. Many books are padded; and the more wide our reading the more shall we find the new book an eclectic volume, chosen from the old ones.

A busy person can not read extensively. He has time but for little. The greater necessity, therefore, for that little to be choice. It may be observed, too, that his reading should be for culture as opposed to utility. He should read to become at home in the various fields of history, poetry, or philosophy. As a rule for his reading, let him take the advice of Emerson and read no book until it be a year old. This rule observed will save him from many a folly; for, Mr. Faux being an authority, the average life of a novel is nine months. Then, in the main, read what Carlyle has named the eternity book. Let your literary conception be molded by the masters.

I REST CONTENT.

If troubles vex me while I take
My way along life's rugged road,
I will not any outcry make,
Nor even murmur at my load.

If tempests make my noon hour dark,
And deluge me with autumn rain,
I still will press me toward God's mark,
Where Christ shall be my deathless gain.

So evermore I turn my face
Toward God's Jerusalem on high,
Where Christ prepares for me a place,
And love and life shall never die.

THE LOWELL LETTERS.

CAN a body ever get enough of Lowell? Can a body who loves the severe and high melody of "The Present Crisis" ever look on him who wrote that pæan without a thrill of personal regard? Or who that loves "The Biglow Papers" can help wanting to feel for the kindly hand that contrived the incomparable Hosea and the not less incomparable pedant, Parson Wilbur? Early or late, let every lover of Lowell pay him tribute. "He is worthy for whom thou doest this thing."

This writer was *disappointed* (underscoring the disappointed) in the Holmes Letters. They seemed manu-

factured like clothes-pins. Lowell, on the happy contrary, is exuberantly spontaneous. He did not write the Letters. They wrote themselves. They took their pen in hand. We find out that as a boy he whistled, and that his mother listened for that bubbling joy of him. Let that stand for his letters' art. There was the whistler in them as with the blackbird. In them "natur' " capers. That laughing sense of humor so apparent in Hosea Biglow runs through the Letters like a girl's laugh; and he tickles himself and you. He must be humor-lacking utterly who can read Lowell's words in passing and not laugh to himself in a jocose way. The humor is quaint, insidious, truculent sometimes, guffawing betimes, rollick-

ing like a boy let loose for an unexpected holiday; in a word, all sorts of humor are here, dainty and rude as befits the mood. He saw the funny side, and let himself lie open to it.

Then the Letters are nature-loving. How he loved the outdoors! Phillips Brooks cared little, next to nothing, for Nature, and when in his occasional summer out in the country was homesick to get back to town. Lowell was not so. Man-lover he was, but Nature-lover he was also. These two things are not incompatibles. They belong neighbors. How good it is to hear Lowell linger among the flowers and trees and wide woods, and to hear him talk of the wide-eyed asters and the elm-trees and the golden-rod. You

would think you were out with one of Nature's connoisseurs; and so you are. I think him our chiefest American Nature-poet easily, notwithstanding Bryant talks of nothing else. But Lowell does love things, green things, growing things. Give him your hand and let him lead you out on an autumn hill-side, where leaves crisp under the straying feet, and the baring branches lean across your tract of sky, and the clouds stand still like boats on quiet water. Let him take your hand.

The Letters, too, are vascular on a religious side. Lowell detested the anatomical form of religion; namely, the scientific (to coin a word) religion of trying to rummage around in the Nature garret and get a god (a god who

spells his name with a small letter), and finds no conscience, no divine mood. Against all this Lowell talks in such a wide, wise way as befits a poet. He saw that God and religion were not mathematics. Blessed is he who sees that.

Then, these Letters reveal a hungry heart. Lowell is so good a lover. His picture looks as if he might have been an American edition of Matthew Arnold (not that Lowell looks like Arnold; I wish no ill like that), in that his face seems cold, critical. Bless him! that is the last thing his heart is. It is warm like a south window in winter when the sun shines. He warmed up to many people, and was hungry to have them do the like with him. There was

what I think a tropic warmth in his make-up which will do anybody good. "Kind hearts are more than coronets." Nothing is more certain.

The Letters will warm our Americanism. That will do us good. He loved America. In his later days he was so much absent from our land on diplomatic service that many thought him growing lukewarm towards his own dear land; and certain it is that he learned to value England more highly, and for reason. In the war times, when England was hostile to us, he grew mad, a good and wholesome kind of mad, at them, and talked out loud. He was right then. They were wrong. But they have learned a thing, and we must not hold spite. And the English

appreciate Lowell, and we warm to our friends, as is natural and right. But that Lowell ever lost his manly democracy and love for New England, with her bleak hills and late springs and her sweet-songed birds and her blessed folks, or ever lost love for wide America, can not be said by those who knew him. He became a trifle of a Mugwump for a time, which was to his disparagement; but maybe he did n't mean it. Let us hope so.

Anyway, read the Letters. They would do no discredit to the days when letter-writing was an art and when the newspapers had not stolen the chat out of the heart's chimney-corner.

WOMANLINESS.

CHARLES KINGSLEY has a poem entitled "St. Maura." I do not recall to have seen it extolled or mentioned, and yet it appeals to me as being one of the most perfect and cardinal expositions of womanliness I have ever read. In her way St. Maura is as perfect as Pompilia.

When a man speaks of womanliness, I think he always feels as if he were in hallowed neighborhood. The idea for which the word stands has so many bewilderments, beauties, holinesses; is so winsome and necessary to this world's comfort and good; is so dear to this world's best hearts, so subduing

to coarseness in men and social manners, so soothing to the disturbed and overwearied life of mankind as to be needed beyond anybody's and everybody's power to compute. God has created woman for womanliness; and every girl should study to fall in with her own character. Womanliness is beyond definition, yet quite observable by absence, just as the sweet voice can not be defined, but if a voice be harsh and ragged, any one can observe it. It sets the nerves at war. We feel as if we were recipients of some personal insolence. So if a woman lack womanliness, the community of the best feels itself aggrieved, and rightly. Mannishness in woman is vulgar on the one side, and wicked on the other. No woman can

make a good man, but every woman can make a superior woman. To her finest physical and soul fiber she is feminine. Her figure, her walk, her appetencies, her plays, her serious occupations, her laughs, her domesticities, her voice; her methods of getting at things intellectually by short cuts; her opinions, her biases; her light-heartedness, which blooms out in ready smiling and sudden songs; her instinctive tenderness to children; her preinclination to pity and pet things; her admiration for strength; her dislike to femininity of behavior in men; her quiet ignoring of other women; her native delight in dainty garments and sprigs of color, in pictures and gems and knick-knacks; her disposition to busy her dainty fingers with

fancy work while she rocks and talks; her keen eye for things becoming; her keen delight in things of her own; her passionate reticencies and volubilities, one as strange as the other (both facts and both charming); her coming to conclusions without grounds; her standing by her own with a fierce determination which is utterly careless of what the whole world might think; her love, spacious enough to engulf the sky; her strength when others are weakness,—these are all feminine traits. She differs from a man by a sky-breadth. She bewilders man and blesses the world by this utter difference. To act like a man is for a woman to abdicate her might. There are men enough anyhow; and there are not too many women.

To see a woman botch womanhood by affecting a gait, acting manny, talking in the upper octaves, being hail-fellow-well-met, and thinking thereby to increase her opportunity and happiness or enlarge her career, is pathetic. She is a woman, after all her man bluster and sputter. Her woman instincts still dig in her heart. The new woman is a hoax, sometimes harmless, oftener harmful, but always a sorry hoax. A cultured, traveled, well-read, dainty, tasty, refined, sweet-voiced Christian woman, God hath nothing fairer nor more needed. The best sphere for a woman is still being a woman. A wide intelligence, a shrewd understanding, a fine sense of honor, a sensitive moral make-up, a devotion to home as to a natal

kingdom, a hand skilled for the adornment of her home, a heart swift to hear and swift to respond, a hand tender in settled ministries of love, a voice fitted to soothe unrest into comfort, calm, and rest,—for such a womanliness there will be demand till time shall die.

A home in which is no sound of woman's garments as she comes down the stairs, nor the come-and-go touch of a woman's white fingers on piano-keys, nor the bird-song rising swift and unpremeditated from a woman's heart, nor the fair figure of a woman standing at a door of springtime evenings with a whole world of welcome in her eyes and smiling on her face,—a home devoid of this is desolate, a poor ruin of what was meant to be a home.

The quality of womanliness in St. Maura which compels admiration is love rising into lofty self-neglect, the power of self-obliteration which is woman's divinest quality. St. Maura was herself a saint, and knew it not, but thinking only how her husband was so strong, so valorous, so Christlike, so unbewildered in his mission and his faith,—him, let him not suffer more, O God!—and she herself, in all his torture, but forgetting all in him, until to hear her speak you would suppose she was at some girl's holiday. I listen to her and weep: I listen to her and rejoice. Self-sacrifice, thy name is woman.

WESLEY'S JOURNAL.

WESLEY'S JOURNAL is stepping out into the daylight of public appreciation. This must be the case increasingly. The Journal as certainly belongs to confessional literature as Augustine's "Confessions," only it is of a healthy human order, and is, as I believe, the expression of a greater man and genius. In confessional literature of the religious type the following may be named as representative and probably pre-eminent books: Augustine's "Confessions," Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," Rutherford's "Letters," Payson's "Memoirs," "The Life of Henry Martyn," "The Life of Brainerd." To

these I would add Asbury's Journal and Wesley's Journal. Of the last two, Wesley's Journal reveals the immensely larger man, and of the list this Journal appeals to me as the healthiest, manliest, wisest.

Of each of these confessions a good word may be said. Each has ministered to many hearts; and a book knowing how to do this is beyond doubt a good book. Thomas à Kempis—what lover of the brave and beautiful Christ has not read him? Not that he is religion's last or best thought. His was the idea of getting away from the world and the devil. Christ's idea was to make the devil get away from you. The one was the gospel of retreat: the other the gospel of conquest. Who needs to say the

gospel of conquest is the more virile and consonant with the perceived spirit of Jesus? But Kempis enjoyed Christ. Rutherford's "Letters" show that he loved Christ with a tropical fervor. St. Augustine was hungry for a sight of Him whose presence makes the whole world light. But of this company, with no inclination to criticise, this seems to be true: they are too self-conscious. They never lose sight of themselves, and this, whether in manners or morals, is a mark of ill-breeding. The best religious life has forgotten itself. The laureate's words must be true always and everywhere:

"Love took up the harp of life, smote on all
the chords with might—
Smote the chord of self, which, trembling,
passed in music out of sight."

In these confessors is something morbid. The hospital is there, with its diseased smells. Just here "Wesley's Journal" reveals the finer spiritual temper. He talks about himself as of a third person, not as Cæsar in his Commentaries, but in a bigger way of seeming to be remote to himself. I once read these confessional works so nearly at once as to keep the flavor of each while the others were being read, and so made sure to myself of this wide discrepancy between the spirit of Wesley and the others.

Wesley's Journal is the history of a work and a worker and a working of the great God. In the first place, Wesley is one of the great users of English. For a style totally competent to express

with absolute clearness the ideas intended I do not know his equal, unless it be Daniel Webster, or Ruskin, or Bunyan. His style is nervous, direct, refreshing; in short, as a study in English, Walter Pater's much-talked-of style is apparent, not transparent. John Wesley's is transparent. For doing what he was hourly, daily bent on doing—namely, putting thought so clearly that the average man could not mistake the largest ideas—John Wesley was a master.

The Journal reveals this, too, that with Wesley life was prayer. Prayer without ceasing was his life; but he does not say so. Here catch the divergence from the other confessors. They talked these things, often volubly. In

him it crops out like gold on a mountain ledge. His prayer life melted into his work life. He does not stop to pray, but prays *en route*. His action is his prayer. He filled days and nights with labors which to superficial eyes had precluded prayers, but which in God's sight was validest prayer. His services, his travels, his sermons, his instructions to preachers, his writing of many books, were all moods of prayer. He was in the world's most crowded street, but was never jostled. He prayed with his eyes open. He watched and prayed, the two being simultaneous. John Wesley's prayer-room at City Road Chapel has never inspired me as his continuity of prayerful effort, never lagging, never ceasing, never aware of itself.

The Journal is unconscious. It is like a healthy man walking, not talking about his walk, but enjoying the exhilaration of it. Wesley had no notion he was a saint, one of the safe signs he was one. He was quite sure he was a man. He had a healthfulness of sentiment and thought wholly good to face and feel. He was God's. Nothing was so sure as that; and so he says little about it. He is immersed in thought for others. His life was a labyrinth of effective service for mankind. He was all hand to write, all pocket to give, all body to travel, all tongue to preach, all sanity for advices. He conceives his personality a medium through which the Divine operates. He does not diagnose his own case. He has no time. He is

doing the will of God, and this keeps him busy. This is why he is so utterly healthy. A country lad, barefoot, freckled as a nighthawk's egg, is not more deliciously healthy than John Wesley's religion. He is not studying his moral arteries and veins. He is up and away for God. You could catch health from John Wesley in his Journal.

And how he worked! It tires us to see him doing it, but does not tire him. He never rests except when he is sick, and then his rest spells are abbreviated, and usually filled with some sort of effort. The most revolutionary word ever told me by man or book as regards facility of effort is this saying of Wesley: "I am always in haste, but never in

a hurry." Wesley worked with little friction. He was never frustrated nor flustered. He had the philosophy of labor by heart. He had speed without perturbation or oscillation. What he did, as a mere proposition in work, is one of the amazements of the world. A translation of the New Testament with notes, both exceedingly wise; his brief but pungent and lucid controversial papers; his abridgments and original treatises on all sorts of subjects; his sermons printed and preached—sermons which constitute a body of theology as certainly as Watson's Institutes—and his Journal, more surprising than Amiel's,—all constitute a body of effort not easy to duplicate in the annals of human labor. He traveled incessantly

as the sun. He organized a Church which can learn no lessons in organization from any existing ecclesiasticism.

The Journal discloses a catholicity of appreciation and attitude not less admirable than modern. He was always reading, and this to his dim old age. His remarks on the books read would make a superior pamphlet on reading. He read all sorts. The scholar instinct was in him. He knew too much to pass anything by,—men, manners, psychological states, religious experience, beauty of landscape, love of learning, a living interest in decaying castle or cathedral or the world. John Howard would not stop to look at a picture because he was in such a frenzy of prison reform. John Wesley was wiser. He,

too, was prison reformer, and took collections time and again for the prisoners dying in horrid stench, frequently visited prisoners about to die, but knew that life was big enough to hold all the landscape of human activities.

And the Journal reveals an exceptionally shrewd, sane man. You could not jostle Wesley. You could not make him lose the points of the compass. Complainers, the whole breed of croakers and fanatics, irritated and disgusted him. He would have no fraternity with them, but, as much as in him lay, suppressed them. He kept a level head. He never let essentials slip through his fingers, and had no tolerance for nonsense and peevishness. No one would become a faker, intellectual or religious,

if he took Wesley's counsel. His Journal is an antidote to fanaticism of every form.

And the Journal is alive. Exuberant life is evidenced on every page. He keeps heart. He has frequent hymns on his lips. I wish I could have heard Wesley pitch a tune. He is never dyspeptic in his views, doings, goings. He is, so to say, having a good time. He enjoys what God has set him at. His face is toward the morning; and his day is full of light.

ALLEN BUCKNER.

THAT name has to my ears a soldier sound. It may be because I knew him so well, and knew that the militant spirit was the breath of his nostrils. He was a Methodist preacher in Illinois, and when the War of the Rebellion began to smoke along the sky, he volunteered as a chaplain, subsequently became a colonel, and commanded his regiment in the thrilling fight of Missionary Ridge. He was a man whose sort is not here now. He is an extinct species. Reared in the hardships of what was then a frontier life, not well educated, a reader of few books, a student of men rather than literature, he was an original per-

sonality, whose like it does the heart good to see. Tall, lean, bearded, a solemn face which seldom broke into laughter; a voice which, with no exaggeration, might be likened to battle-drums, and which was heard on battle-fields above the battle's roar; a heart sweet as a pasture field; a courage which had no tremors, but fairly rollicked in danger, as sea-birds in a storm; a fast friend; a preacher of original might, he poured the gospel into men as if they had been pitchers to be filled; a vast patriot; and a lover of family and of God.

How Allen Buckner did love his country! How glorious the flag was to his heart! How his face lit when he talked of the Union! Why, it was an antidote to mugwumpery to see him and

hear him when he marched among the old battle-days as he were a soldier still. I have listened to him in public and private with unfeigned delight. It was like being near a storm-center to be near him. And his family was beautiful and bright to him. His children were all smart, and his wife wonderful to his heart. They were a winsome family; but I loved best to hear him tell of them, for to him they had no equals. And he loved the Methodist Church in such a soldier fashion as to make the blood burn through the heart. Those people who think and say, "One Church is as good to me as another," would have found their weak, attempted catholicity rebuked by him. He loved his Church as much as Jan Ridd loved Lorna

Doone. His loyalty was not blind, but true and strenuous. There was battle in his love. For years he was presiding elder on the frontier district in Kansas, when his round was a circuit such as would have honored the old circuit-riders. Complaint was not in him. This work he did with the same gallant fervor as had characterized him when he was a soldier. He loved God and the Church in such lover fashion as warms weak love into a passion.

I remember the first time I saw him as if it were an hour ago. He was stooped and gray then, and a constant cough, learned in battle days, shook him; and his face was seamed and solemn. I recall talks by the hour I have had with him; how he would pour out

Scriptures by the chapter from his Scripture-laden memory, and in such musical fashion as minded you of a mountain torrent with fury and music! All the wealth of sound and poetry and Christ the sacred words contained he squeezed out in his fond outpours. And this man, after a life loyal to every good thing through many years, after years of battling with the wound received in his country's cause, with a heart clean as a lily's snow, with a candor which sometimes made men wince, with a perception of divine things as sure as sight and sense,—this loyal man died the other day at his daughter's home in Iowa. He was a man of haggard face and slow steps, a great putterer around his little garden-patch, a lover of out-

doors, a digger in God's ground, a taciturn man for the most, true as truth; and, to use words from J. G. Holland, "in the great company of the Redeemed, I shall be sure to meet" Allen Buckner.

He led the charge at Missionary Ridge. In that strangest of all charges of the valorous war; when the armies moved while no general gave command for march; when the soldiers took the battle in their own hands, and general looked at general, saying, "Did you order that charge?" and each replied, "No,"—the men swept on, caught in the sublime impulse of war; and in that charge this preacher-colonel was leader. His regiment, with himself at the head, climbed up the ravine to the crest of the hill, and drove the enemy from the

ridge. He, with the flag in his hand and his voice trumpeting above the battle clamor, stepped out in front of his men, held his flag aloft, and called so that the roar of battle could not drown his words, "Follow me!" and they followed him. So the armies of the Union followed a Methodist parson up a bloody battlefield to victory.

He is dead! But I see him with his flag and saber before the line, and hear his battle cry, "Follow me!" And battle fervor grips me as if I were a soldier and the fight was on. Good soldier for country and for Christ, brave man, sleep with a good sleep and quiet! You have earned a furlough; and God has given it, for Allen Buckner is in God's summer-land.

OUT OF DOORS.

EVERYBODY owes it to oneself to get freckled; and to be freckled you must go out of doors. Let girls think as they may, they are never so lovely as when they mix a few freckles with their dainty dimples; and a boy who is only pink and white makes a body think of a hothouse plant. The men who had first sight of the Christ were people who lived out of doors, and the dwellers in stately Jerusalem hard by saw him not till years after. To go sight-seeing out of doors is an invitation youth ought to accept gayly.

It is good to walk on the ground, any way. To feel the spongy earth yield to

the foot gives a feeling of self-respect as if we were really weighty members of society; and to sit down on a bank of fern and moss is to make costliest furniture seem a crude invention. Have you never tried it? Pity you for a tenderfoot. Pray you, read the unapproachable John Ruskin's story of the moss, and be enamored of it forever after: "Creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honor the scarred disgrace of ruin; laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none are perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the bosses of furred and beaming green, the starred divisions of

rubied bloom, fine-filmed as if the Rock Spirits wove porphyry as we do glass,—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fiber into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pen-sive and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace? They will not be gathered like the flowers for chaplet or love-token; but of these the wild-bird will make its nest, and the wearied child its pillow.”

And did you ever go bird’s-nesting? Not, to be sure, as the small boy does, to take eggs or little chicks away, or be unmannerly with the birdie’s home; but for the joy of finding where and how the birds keep house and seeing

how sedate the little mother is, and how important (as all mothers are), and how the bird man of the house struts and acts consequential and scolds—and runs away (for shame!) To have bird neighbors, to chatter with the wrens, to match the saucy blue-jay's call as he plays pirate in the sky, to venture a good-natured "howdy" to the impudent crow, to go down the gully and hear the modest little chickadee call in vigorous and important phrase and manner, "Chic-a-de-dee, Chic-a-de-dee!" as if he had some throat trouble and could hardly wheeze above his breath! They would not do for preachers. They could not be heard while giving out the hymns. Have you been hail-comrade with the hedge-sparrows when they are jolly as Christmas,

and care not a fig for the coming of clouds nor the falling of snows, no more than a boy does or a girl when skating? Or have you listened to the modest phœbe calling "Phœ-be, Phœ-be," like a mother calling her daughter who is plainly off a-sparking with a boy: "Phœ—be?" Or watched the wicked shrike, born to murder "as sparks to fly upward?" Or seen the cuckoo, lazy as a boy in spring when the plowing is to be done and the fishing is good—better, withal, than the plowing?

Last summer, in shady and enchanting June, I took a journey to see some sprawling thrushes in a nest in a hedge-row. Their mother was gadding about somewhere (I suppose she belonged to a club, though this is, you will under-

stand, mere surmise); and there in the cozy nest, four little bunts of birds flung back their heads, opened their cavernous mouths like box-lids, and shouted to me at the top of their funny treble, "Dinner, din-ner! din-di-dinner!" and their box-lid mouths staring wide open, as impotent to shut, made me feel ashamed I had brought no Ralston baled-hay bread nor any canned roast-beef. Honestly, I felt ashamed. They such hungry little codgers, and so vociferous, and I so shamefully unprepared to act as a Christian ought! Nobody should go where a baby is without a cooky in his pocket, or where a birdie is without some double-X diet of some sort to give the wee laddie. Presumably, these birds were too young to

notice I was a preacher, or they would have known I was without means of support for them, or myself either. It is no use asking a preacher for victuals. He is too poor ever to have any left over. That green hedge-row, with leaves as glossy as laurel; those little blind beggars; that gad-about mother; that scolding pa; that high and warm blue arch of sky; that wind fresh from fields where hay was being raked into fragrant rows; the neglectful clouds, puttering along the sky, like truants,—can I forget the day and the nest and the joy of all of it? When winter days have been crowded with folks and labors, I have forgotten folks and job and big city cloaked with smoke, and have only heard the hungry birds, and

have looked at all the pastoral scene, and smelled the hay-fields—and have been rested.

And did you never climb trees? I care not who you are nor what gender, you ought to climb trees. There is action in it, and frequently accelerated action. I have myself not infrequently gone at the rate of seventy-five miles an hour. This, of course, was not when I was going up. I am no squirrel. I take my time for ascent; but in coming down, on occasion when a limb broke, I have scooted like an avalanche. This act should not be given when there are spectators. They giggle; and you can not climb well when silly gigglers are present. No; going down a tree at an express-train rate is essentially an ex-

temporaneous effort. Preparation does no good. I prefer to do these sleight-of-hand acts by myself. I do them just as well, and, though my clothes are lacerated as much as with an audience, my feelings are not. But the whole thing is fine! What is golf compared with coming down a tree when the limb breaks? It is insipid, positively. You and a caddy hunting lost balls you can not find,—that is doleful. But climbing is not doleful. It is gleeful. If you manage to climb the tree, that is fun. If you manage to stay up the tree, that is triumph which had suited Hannibal. If you come down the tree express free, why that is locomotion. If you can sway in the tree-tops when a wild wind blows, the birds can have no more fun

than that, except by flying. That is the amusement of crows, letting the wind rock their boat crested on a tree-top. He loves to have the winds rock his tree-top. Fun! Fun!! And if your limb breaks, and you go down the tree wildly, shaving your shins, prodding your elbows, and ultimately indenting the earth on which you alight with more alacrity than grace, you have at least been unconventional, and that is fun. Take the advice of one who has tried, and climb trees.

To get on the far end of a slippery-elm limb (which has as much grit as a snapping-turtle), and let yourself hold on with your own two hands, and kick with your own two feet, and so descend, describing a semi-circle (and so being

geometrical), and be swung lightly to the earth by the sag of the limb—man, that is sport! This is a sort of flying. We shall be birds yet, *a la Darwin*, if we keep at this flying business. Wings will sprout, certain.

Be out of doors. Go out early of dewy mornings. Then is the world incalculably rich. Every tree, leaf, and grass-blade and flower-petal is radiant as the high priest's breastplate. Every morning is lavish of gems. I have seen no diamonds so bright with splendor as the diamonds of the dew. And on snowy nights, when moonlight owns the sky and land, heaven's streets are paved with gold; but on such nights earth's streets on snowy moonlights are diamonds set in white landscapes. You are

royal, and all royal things beckon you to come.

Or study to make the acquaintance, the all-year-round acquaintance, of a single tree. Have you stood under a wild-crab in bloom, when the wild bees and the tame bees quarreled for its honey? It is the country against the city; but what a sight and what precious odors! Study some tree a year. Your pains will be repaid. See the early green come shyly forth. Watch every day, else you will be tripped up. In spring, in particular, changes occur almost hourly. Leaves are cunning and deceiving. The swelling bud, the tightening jerkin of the bud like a little lad outgrowing his clothes, the first trivial leaf, a dim yet surprising emerald, then

a colony of leaves, and after that the tree stands shaded by its own shadows. All summer to autumn watch the tree. Know its little oddities. Forsake it not when the fall winds blow bleak, and the leaves scatter like migrating birds; and when the tree stands desolated of all its children, like a childless house, study the tree yet when winter presses rudely yet not unkindly. And you will have happy memories of that year through all the years you live.

Go out of doors.

SOME AMERICAN BIOGRAPHIES.

BIOGRAPHIES are to be read for one of two reasons, and at intervals for both these reasons. One reason is, the merit of the subject of the biography; the other is, the merit of the biography. To the former class would belong a *Life of Daniel Webster*; to the latter, Mrs. Gaskell's "*Life of Charlotte Brontë*;" and to both classes Lockhart's "*Life of Sir Walter Scott*." When both these symptoms concur, of course that is to be desired; but we must learn to content ourselves with a minimum of effectiveness and merit.

Plutarch taught mankind to read biography. That is a settled human

habit now. We want to get into the privacies of genius, or of goodness and service. And this is not to be set down as inquisitiveness, but as dignified interest in the larger manifestations of soul. I want to know about Cæsar, and Charlemagne, and Cromwell, and Milton, and Columbus, and Burke, and Raleigh, and Erasmus, and Luther. One of the world's irretrievable losses is, that no biography of Shakespeare is possible. He has eluded us. His birthplace and his burial-place are all we authentically possess. We feel we have a right to know the wealth lying in a great souls' boundaries, and, denied such knowledge, experience a sense of loss which amounts to a grievance.

Biography is an attempt to perpetuate

these men of larger type for the inspection and enchantment of the future. That in some instances our desire should savor a little of the idle, prurient curiosity that brings men to a morgue, is quite conceivable; but that the general temper of the inquiry is of this sort is preposterous to suppose.

We are in danger of not being sufficiently familiar with our home products. Our thought becomes foreignized. It should be our study to domesticate our reading and thinking enough so as to make us at home with the life of our own latitudes. This Western world has growths of its own big as our forests and wide as our prairies. These lives ought to be our familiars. The intent of this chapter is to direct young eyes

to the pages of wise books in which the life of some American is brought out to the light of day.

Washington Irving's "Life of Washington" is such a biography. I head the list with this as a sort of grand master. We must never fail in our courtesy to George Washington. He is patron saint of American liberty. Without him, I deem it extremely doubtful whether the Constitution could have been adopted when it was, and the thirteen colonies changed from a weak confederation to a powerful federation. Washington's was the service of character. Of that high and imperishable renown belonging to the Field Marshal of the Revolution and first Executive, this must always be the unfading crown—what he

was—the worth and wealth of character to a community. Washington Irving, a manly man, wrote the biography of George Washington, a manliest man.

Asbury's Journal shall be placed next. It records the gloomy labors of a great spirit; a man to whom, not Methodism only, but all America, owes a debt not easy to estimate, but impossible to overestimate. He was an Englishman by birth and rearing, but an American in labors and progressiveness. He was an advance guard of civilization,—liberty without license, intelligence, morality, religion who was always on the frontier, was restless as the ocean, tireless as the stars, safe as the Constitution, fearless as a soldier, indefatigable in goodness, a slave to virtue

and to God. Recall that he was first of ecclesiastics to call on the newly-inaugurated Washington and wish him God-speed, and promise him, for a denomination, loyal support, and recall that he taught the largest of the American Churches to get to, and to keep on, the frontiers; and you will begin to estimate the specific gravity of this pioneer for religion. His Journal is worthy to be read by all who aspire to consecrate their every effort to the welfare of mankind.

The "Life of Noah Webster" is a biography of more than usual interest in that it recites the struggles and successes of a man who may in justice rank as father of American scholarship. Webster's Dictionary is pride to all

Americans who have any national pride. For myself, I confess I can not rid me of the romance clinging to that portly volume. It stands a sentinel on the frontier line of American scholarship.

“Abraham Lincoln, A History” (Niccolay and Hay), though recently written, is already become a classic because of the unique greatness of him whose life-story it tells. This ten-volume history is voluminous to be sure, but so were the services of Abraham Lincoln. He has set his hand-print on all America as indelibly as he has set his hand-print on all Africa. The men who hated him are now become his panegyrists. As provincialism ebbs out of American life, as is sure to be the case, Lincoln will become an enlarging personality. We

can not be quit of him; and we can never tire of him. He has come to stay, as stay he ought. Therefore, a history of him and the tremendous times whose central figure he was, becomes a necessity to every young American, man or woman, who means well by his country.

To Leaguers, the "Life of Bishop Ninde" might well be a beloved book. That good man was for happy years a lover of the League, and loved of the League, and for a time its president. A Church has not often produced a cleaner, manlier, more devout representative. He was a man of whom impurity of thought or motive was simply inconceivable. This biography, written by a loving, lauding, competent daugh-

ter, is morally bound to stimulate the best resident in the soul.

A "Life of Goodyear" ought to be read to teach the grace of grit, the art of continuance. He was a man of masteries over discouragements. His life would give heart, I think, to a man fairly slain by defeat.

A "Life of Peabody" should be studied because he was one of our chief teachers in the hard lesson of the right use of great riches. He saw that to get was well, but to give was widely better; and he may represent such of his successors as are pouring in riches hard earned and immense, such as makes the story of Cræsus read like a tedious tale.

A "Life of Horace Greeley" is wise

reading. I suppose he may stand as sample of great editors. He was for freedom. He loved America and the people. He proved that his pen was mightier than many swords. A paper such as he made the New York *Tribune* was monument of a great, brave, homely, sagacious soul, that meant well by his kind.

Then, there are "The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant." The three foremost soldiers of the Rebellion have written memoirs, a thing on which we may well congratulate ourselves. Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan have told us their campaigns. They are fascinating as Dumas's soldier tales, besides being true as truth. Sherman's Biography is

genial, soldier-like, modest, discriminating, loyal to his great chief, Grant, and will do any heart good that reads it. But, as appears to my mind, after having read many soldier histories, self-penned, Grant's Memoirs are incomparable. That taciturn man wrote a story so sturdy, so worthy, so lucid, so high above envy, so modest in reciting the greatest battle events of history, so unconscious of his impregnable place in these stormy events and in the Nation's history and heart; and when I read, and as I read, he compels my loyalty and love. How rich a Nation is to grow a soldier like this—steady, unelate, undepressed, immovable, unenvying, loyal to subordinates, giving free hand and free

praise to his Shermans and Sheridans, colossal in his battle grasp, quiet in his faith in God, clean-hearted, a lover to his day of death! His Memoirs ought to find a place in every youth's library. This is a book not to be borrowed, but to be owned.

THE NIGHTLESS DAY.

THERE is a land of nightless day,
Where gloomy shadows never rise ;
Where twilights come not, dim and gray,
To shame and darken glory's skies.

This is God's land, his land and mine,
Of springtime morning, chaste delight,
With service radiant and fine,
Which needs no respite and no night.

My heart sings glad and wistful hymns,
What times it foldeth hands to pray ;
But all its lonely longing dims
While dreaming of this nightless day.

WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR?

MAN is immortal. That is the keyword of his destiny, that the point of centrality in his character about which all the currents of his being sweep. It is man's immortality that explains his elevation above common animality. For man mortal, give shelter from the stormy night, give food to satisfy his hunger, give hearth at which to warm his outstretched hands, give garments to hide him from the winter's chill; for man mortal, give animal comforts, and he will have enough. But for man immortal, give knowledge and research and room for thought, give friends and love and home and truth and aspiration;

for man immortal, give a cross at which to worship, and a Christ to whom to make his prayer, and a mercy-seat bedewed with blood.

The august fact of soul is, it can not die. Suicide is impossible. Man must live, and must live with himself, forever. As a mountain can not escape its shadow, so man can not escape his own companionship. Remember, soul, you must keep yourself company forever. Yourself and God you can not escape. They track you as light tracks the stars. When we recall the thing it is, life becomes more thrilling than naval duel with thundering guns, and empire changing hands when battle ends. We are making character. That is our sole business. We thought we were doing

some form of world's labor; but we were not. We were building manhood or destroying it. Character outlasts everything but God. If we could die, character would not be imposing and terrible; but we are deathless: and this immortal life enhances the importance of this earthly life. We are all in one business. One thing God can not do, and that is make character. Immortality God gives to all: character he gives to none. The making of Gobelin tapestries is a parable of life. A worker weaves his life into a single tapestry, and when it is barely done, ere the thread has left his hand, he dies. His tapestry is what he has to show for life. Our tapestry is character, and is meant to hang in the King's galleries forever.

Our relationships grow out of who we are. A kitten sleeps, and plays, and purrs, and on occasion becomes petty marauder and petty assassin. What does well for a kitten, does ill for a man. Animals have no moral sense; but swing life into manhood, and there are no relations not moral. Responsibility grows according to position. The child may sing in the sun, and be sportive as the butterfly he chases; but lift the child into magistracy, and he must do new things because he is new things. His old life has drifted leagues behind him. His new life bids him gird himself with might. What he is shapes his relation. Christians, our question is, "Consider-

ing who we are, how must we behave?" Ben Hur a galley-slave was one thing; Ben Hur the richest subject in the Cæsar's empire is another. The galley-slave's obligations were slight as gossamer threads; the prince's obligations were huge as cables that anchor ships in stormy seas.

But beyond this, our relations are mandatory. We have so much and are so much that we owe so much. That is the statement of our case. I fear me, our chance shall be our doom. Men are letting their chances damn them. God is expecting of you, Christians, according to who you are; and you are God's daughters and God's sons. Hereafter, may it not be your voice crying, "My

chance has been my doom," but may you say, "My chance has been my glory."

Thus it is apparent that our immortality and our personality as sons of God are the tremendous questions. They dwarf all others. Nay, besides them, there are no others. Christians are folks who acknowledge their immortality and live with reference to it, and who acknowledge God in Christ, and behave in consonance with their relation to him. Christians are immortals living for God as the summer of their hopes and loves and oblations. Christians, you are living for all the worlds there are. You will be quite at home in all worlds. Where heaven is, you do not know nor care. You know you will be

at home in heaven. Its etiquette you will have learned; its citizenship will not be new; its speech will be your mother tongue. In all God's stars you will be citizen; and that is satisfactory. We are living for this world and all worlds. This is God's world, and we love it as a patriot loves his country, and we will be loyal to it and serve it as a soldier serves his flag. Christ's folks are to feel safe and valiant in all Christ's dominion, and can not even be tripped up by the rope death ties across their pathway in the dark. Nothing disconcerts them.

You are living for youth. You are young, act like it. You have your youth once, here; the youth eternal, there. People who want you to act old when you are young are not making a wise

demand. I confess to liking the gurgle of a girl's laughter about nothing, and the explosion of a boy's blast of laughter like a chuckle of waves I have heard on the seashore. As people grow old they look back at youth to get the dew-flash of the flowers. Make much of youth. Let laughter be the wine you drink, and drink no other. Have joy. Men have not too much laughter, rather too little. Take holidays. Let business slip the leash. Enjoy the day. Be merry above the birds. Go to baseball and football, and go cycling; but remember God's day to keep it holy, and remember whose sons and daughters you are, and in your merry-makings disport you like the children of the King. Use your youth for what you will not need to

undo. To work long years, and then to work long and longer other years, "to ravel out your weaved-up follies"—how utter the pathos of such a career! Christians are not so. They work the enduring service. God holds the skein they wind from. The Christian loses no time. He has no retreats, but is as General Otis's troops, marching forward, always forward. That was the thrill of Grant's campaigns. He never took time for retreat. Tides must recede. The tides of God recede not, but move forever up the shore. Christians sow no wild oats—and reap none. You kill no time. You crucify no opportunity. You are saving time for God; and your work counts. A good life never needs undoing. How good that is! You are

sworn partners of the good and holy life.

You are to grow in appreciation of all best things. Measure your life by its positivity. Appreciation is a holy art like the art of prayer. Some measure their culture by its lack of appreciation. Study the art of seeing things, pure things, beautiful things, divine things, heroic episodes in common life, sweet things. Be not blind. This is God's world. Let no one forget that for this is our delight which outshines the morning. And if God passed this way, his footsteps are here. Watch for them. Do not be chary of enjoying pictures, nor books, nor folks, nor open fields rimmed with the sky; and be not chary

of saying so. Jesus, our Master, saw things. Study his gift.

You are living for making friends. Be generous in friendships. Love plenty of people. Do n't be stingy of love. "Give, and it shall be given you." Make a host love you. Be rich in friendships which shall be perennially sweet *that* side the sea as well as this. Do not suppose you can only love one friend. Enlarge your heart so you can love many friends. "Ye are my friends." Christ has many friends, why should not you?

You are living for seeding your souls to goodness as we have seen spring fields seeded to clover which tossed and laughed in summer winds, and lent fra-

grance, and welcomed the traveler to look at its loveliness. Seed souls to beauty, beautiful above the flowers.

You are living for serving other folks as and more than you serve yourselves. We are working out. We are at work with God and for others. We work for men; and God pays us our wages. And we are well paid! Living for the Christ who died for us: let nothing obscure that saving and amazing truth. The crucified Christ! Who died for us! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission;" forget not that. A Christianity without a cross is superficial and useless. A Christ with a cross on his shoulders, and a cross with a Christ upon it, that makes us giants. We have something to live for and

something to tone heroism up; something to triumph in and to thank God for. "The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." A cross and a God; and both are ours; and we are living for the Divine, crucified Christ, whose we are, and whom we serve; for he "loved us and gave himself for us."

BOSWELL'S JOHNSON.

BENJAMIN JOWETT's literary fealty oscillated between Plato and Boswell's Johnson. To be loved by such as he would have been the dream of such as they; and certainly the affection of a man of Jowett's mental and moral caliber is enough to make us men of lesser stature, lovers of his friends. The points of intellectual contact of these two diverse characters on the life of Jowett is to be explained in this wise: Plato touched his ideality, Johnson his practicality; Plato was a genius, Johnson a man of talent and industry; Plato was the finest dreamer outside of our princely poets, Johnson was eminently

a man of sense and walked on the earth heavy-footed; Plato was remote and cold, Johnson neighborly and human. Thus understood, there is room for both and need for both in any capacious soul. Of Plato,—no word here; and of Johnson, just a word.

If the reason for Boswell's Johnson being accorded the rank of the finest biography in our language or in any language were looked into narrowly, this would doubtless be settled on as such cause: It paints a man as he was with his coat off and sitting in his shirt-sleeves. Johnson is evidently at home. His company manners are not on him. You may object that it had been better if Johnson had been a man possessed of company manners. That may be. I

will not argue. But certain we must be, if familiar with Chesterfield and his manners and Johnson and his manners, that the home manners of Johnson were infinitely to be preferred to the company manners of Chesterfield. The one was a gentleman in an impoverished state, doing housework; the other no gentleman on street or in palace, though attended by bowing and obsequious footmen. The one had a man's heart; the other, a society veneer thin as the mahogany on pianos.

In thinking of Johnson I find myself calling him Lexicographer Johnson, or Boswell's Johnson. These two names include the man. The initial maker of a lexicon is subject worthy of a great portrait. Of the two, himself was the

large contribution to letters and life. Boswell's Johnson is so utterly diverse from Samuel Johnson of his books. In his books he is fustian and literary self-consciousness; in Boswell he is not fustian, but truculent as new sword-blades. In his books he walks with a literary strut; out of his books he rolled like a smack crossing the English Channel. There were two Johnsons not at all alike,—the literary Johnson with the pen in his hand, and the English Johnson with his friends at his side, and his voluble notions finding expression, curt, epigrammatic, short as a hyphen. We would not omit "The Lives of the Poets" from our libraries, but better omit a score of them and "Rasselas" than Boswell's Johnson, for his talk

seems antidote for death. Macaulay and Carlyle, as diverse as Samuel Johnson versus Boswell's Johnson, delighted in Boswell, and wrote of the author disclosed in the book. Hazlitt paid his addresses to him in that style of thought and feeling which leaves so little needing to be said. Hear him:

“His good deeds were as many as his good sayings. His domestic habits, his tenderness to servants, and readiness to oblige his friends; the quantity of strong tea he drank to keep down sad thoughts; his many labors reluctantly, irresolutely begun, and irresolutely laid aside; his honest knowledge of his own, and indulgence to the weaknesses of others; his throwing himself back in the post-chaise with Boswell, and saying,

‘Now I think I am a good-humored fellow,’ though nobody thought him so, and yet he was; his quitting the society of Garrick and his actresses, and his reason for it; his dining with Wilkes, and his kindness to Goldsmith; his sitting with the young ladies on his knee at the Mitre to give them good advice, in which situation, if not explained, he might be taken for Falstaff; and last and noblest, his carrying the unfortunate victim of disease and dissipation on his back up through Fleet Street (an act which realizes the parable of the good Samaritan),—all these, and innumerable others, endear him to the reader, and must be remembered to his lasting honor.”

After this brilliant *résumé* of the

man, what need be said? He was a man. He loved people. He was a clean man in a foul era. When men were by common understanding and their own loud professions libertines, he was true to a woman as flower to the sun, and when she died his manly moaning was something to set us all sobbing. His life was clean. He was not of the slums. He carried a clean heart in a manly breast. If one were to read "Chesterfield's Letters to his Son," and here see what ethics a fond father sought to impart to his son, who was all the man loved in the world, and note how he inculcated no morality save one of convenience and policy, nor utters a word of manly regard for his wife, the boy's mother, and teaches impurity as an ac-

complishment of an educated gentleman,—in the light of such reading will the sturdy decency of Boswell's Johnson shine like morning.

He was independent as the Barons who wrested the Magna Charta from King John, or those men who smote King George with the Declaration of Independence. In an age of sycophancy gone mad, when literary men were nothing more than hangers belted at the side of some noble lord, Johnson wrote an author's declaration of independence. Hear it and feel proud of the man forever. And his was the hand that opened the door to author's self-respect, and changed genius from a court appendage to an initial force in society, self-respecting and self-relying.

All honor to irascible, trumpet-voiced, pock-scarred, truculent old Johnson! He had a flinty independence which in its day was of more worth to authorship and to manhood in general than mines of gold.

And he was a sturdy Christian. He believed in God. Atheism he gave no ear to nor had any patience with. In that brutal way of his he would settle on the infidel with a thousand-ton weight, and blatant infidels there were little accessible to the finer courtesies, and flamboyant with infinite assurance then as now. Bolingbroke and Bayles and Paine were vociferous as sea-gulls; and the value of this old autocrat's maintenance of the faith in the face of this deluging unbelief appears like an

apostolate. Wesley was exorcising the demon from society, and Johnson, his contemporary, was making Doubt sit for a moment in squelched silence.

Read Boswell, and find we may take the epithet applied to Ben Jonson and apply it to the writer of lexicon and poets' lives and sayer of brave and brusque and true words, out of a true heart, "O rare Boswell's Johnson!"

MELROSE ABBEY ON A SABBATH EVENING.

FOR six and thirty hours there had been a drench of rain such as by centuries of practice Scotland has learned to pour out; and, in consequence, the Abbey Hotel was desolated of inhabitants. I was there; but that did not count. And if I had chartered the hostel for that summer night I had not had a more obliging solitude. Now, the Abbey Hotel builds part of the garden wall that hedges the Melrose Abbey churchyard in so that as I sat in the window of this quiet guest-room, the Abbey looked me straight in the eyes, standing near enough to touch me if its

arm had not been withered these centuries and its hand empty as the hands of death ; and the solemn God's acre lay quite asleep beneath my window.

The western skies were washed clean of clouds, though to eastward were billows of brooding blackness and cumulating whiteness, and the sun, changing from slant rays to straight rays, hung the Abbey walls with a robe of wearied sunlight beautiful to see. While evening shadows lengthened and the sunshine was a-fading, I walked alone in the churchyard, leaned over the half-effaced inscriptions, dug their slow meanings out, bethought me of the whole sky of sorrow which rained into those few, almost inarticulate words of grieving, and found, as I always find

when walking in the lanes of death, a sob choking in my throat. Death puts grieving into everybody's heart. I look at the sun-dial on the south side of the Abbey, cut crudely enough two and a half centuries ago, though, watching the sun set, I judged this timepiece to be accurate enough for timing the doings of the day; and these dead folk needed no clock to watch the moving of the shadows of the night.

On Sabbath evening the Abbey is shut. No pilgrim may enter these solemn transepts on this holy day. This exclusion was fitting, nor was I grieved thereby, rather gladdened. I was alone in the churchyard solitude; and the Abbey was my company, standing bathed in sudden sunlight and waiting,

a little eagerly, as I thought, for the solacing shadows of the night. So I walked to and fro. Some little children, glad with children's laughter, came bringing flowers to strew them on a grave, and with them a sad and sweet-faced woman; and these came and vanished; and the graves kept their quiet as not knowing happy life had invaded their graveyard for a playground,—kept their quiet, solemn but not sullen; and the childish laughter faded; and the Abbey and I were again left to our dim quietude.

Then the sunlight flashed for a fitful moment on the ruined walls and roof, and went out like a rushlight blown out by the wind, and “even was come.” The shadows began to deepen. There

was to be no moon, which I did not regret. With all deference to that dear poet who has put this lovely Abbey in the front dooryard of everybody's heart, I think the solemn starlight and the dusk of unlit darkness more consonant with the Abbey spirit than ever the gracious moonlight could be. The Abbey belongs to twilights, dusks, and nights. So out of the churchyard I went, and climbed to my watch-tower in the silent guest-room, put out the obtrusive lights the maid had lit, shut the door behind me, dragged the old chair, which had held a century of guests, up close to the window ledge, put my chin in my hands and my elbows on the window sill, and gave way to dreaming. Dreams are such a stay to living, so devotional and

comforting, so ministrant to faith and future as to be a necessity of soul. "Come apart and rest a little," was the saying of the Greatest Dreamer of them all; and He would give them time to dream. Himself through many a starlit night dreamed till the dawn. I sat and dreamed. The Abbey looked so lonely, widowed of its worshipers; its builders dead centuries since; its walls broken; its inscriptions effaced; its altars dust; its windows broken to brittle bits by huge-fisted winds; its arches, some fallen, some bent beneath a snow-drift of wintry years; the old belfry from which in the dead time the vesper bells sang silvern to the retreating valley of the Tweed, desolate now of any music, and broken utterly; the cloisters,

where the monks used to mumble many prayers, are empty now, and very solitary; the doors, which used to be swung back by eager hands and loving, have fallen from their hinges and rotted years ago; the walls, which were used to hold the Abbey roof on high, are useless pillars now, and only serve to grow shivering grasses (from which a bluebell leans looking toward the graves), which swish in the wind with voices voluble and melancholy as tears. Against the dun sky I can see the dimming Abbey walls.

The Abbey is stately with great memories. No littleness is here, nor any churlishness, only winds wintry in loneliness. The summer winds shiver, the grasses give forth fitful sighs; there is

grieving through the broken arches and empty windows and prone bastions and forgotten cloisters; and the Abbey sits solitary, with folded hands, but not broken in spirit, lofty-minded like a wounded king,—sits pensive, packed with all holy memories prodigious in comfort.

And I thought of the dead old builders who loved to say their prayers in stone. Those strong and manly hands put a lover's touch on all these solemn walls. They sobbed their grief in window arches, and lifted their aspirations in roof and tower, and built less for the love of money than for the love of God, and obtained this holy witness that God, that great Lover of the beautiful and the devout, had comfort in their builded

aspirings, psalms, and prayers; and so, with every chisel's blow and shaping of an arch or carving of some remote corner, they wrought a holy life into a holy house. They slighted nothing, seeing all was builded unto God. They did with dainty care as unto One who sees the darkness as the light, nor spared any pains nor prayers nor tears. They loved to linger in some quiet cathedral nook, and make the reticencies of faith bloom in a stone garden of trefoil, and forest arch, and wandering vine of molding; not restless haste, but comfortable leisure spending itself in building unto God. I thought of these dead builders. I tried to look them in the face, but could not, quite. Each pulled his cowl about his cheeks, and said a *Pater Noster*. To

think of those dead workers who wrought their life into this ruined Abbey touched me into tears. We must not think because this cathedral is a ruin now, their work was a superfluity. There is no ruin in the sight of God when holy folk do holy deed for love of holy God. They toiled not in vain. God knows no ruined arches nor chancels nor aisle nor choir nor transept.

And then I thought of the cowed monks who were wont to walk these cloisters and chant their penitential psalms in this deep solitude, and keep their lonely vigils through long nights to dawn—men who had forsaken all to follow Him, and who, cut off from human kinships, felt the sacred kindredship of Christ. I thought of them.

They, in turn, filled my thought room-full. I heard their sobs of penitential grief. They thought their sins were great. I stumbled to my knees. My sins, no doubt, were multiples of theirs. "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and the winds through the ruined Abbey seemed sobbing in contrition too, though in a whisper, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This Abbey keeps remembrance of sin. "We have all sinned." That knowledge is root of all saintliness. Those who grow to goodness know their sin. Their cheeks were wet with tears, and their eyes were full of abundant weeping yet. Once I thought I heard a monk sobbing. Those old devotees are at peace with God, where there are no more tears nor any crying.

I thought of the worshipers at this shrine,—the men mad with battle and foray, the women who sobbed out their lives widowed of love by predatory battle, the white face and blue lips holding dead babe or lover against the heart and trying to learn that lesson hard as death, “Thy—will—thy will—be—done. Thy will—” and sobs choked the remnant of the prayer.

I saw these empty windows lit with holy light. I heard the solemn chant, “Miserere, miserere!” and the dull boom of many voices like the shock of distant seas. I saw the abbot, with his fingers holding fast the cross, walking from the cloister gate out among the graves, and watching the slow coming of the stars, and brooding in these

words, "Behold I come quickly," when, with hurrying speech, I found my voice saying, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus."

And Melrose Abbey lifted ruined wall against the background of starlit sky.

A NEGLECTED ESSAYIST.

IF called on to make a list of the greater essayists from Plato to Lowell, be sure the name of William Hazlitt will not only appear, but will appear well at the top. He may take his place, without the courtesy of an invitation, with Bacon and Montaigne. Montaigne is scarcely more fresh, and Bacon scarcely more profound. Of such essayists as Addison, Steele, Johnson, Charles Lamb, Macaulay, Carlyle, Talfourd, Mackintosh, Emerson, George William Curtis, Lowell (and their names sound good to the heart), Hazlitt is easily first. His genius ran readily into molds, a necessity of the essay. He saw the hori-

zons round a subject, and could therefore bring his theme into the range of our vision. He was at times as choleric as Swinburne (when he rights essays—Swinburne should hold to poetry), and often as brilliant as Emerson, and much more relevant, more connected, more vivacious, more critical and deeper in soul insight than Macaulay, more versatile than Carlyle (in essay-writing, understand), sprightlier in thought and style than Johnson, and of widely greater intellectual acumen and resources than Addison, as delicate and tender at times as Charles Lamb, as brilliant in literary insight as Lowell. As I read over the English and American essayists he appears to me their greater

brother, though I love them man by man.

By some not fully explained waywardness of public or publisher, or both, Hazlitt is little known to our generation, certainly read far below his deservings. This is not Hazlitt's misfortune, but ours. That willful, irritable, irascible, fickle, froward man of genius fell asleep more than seventy years ago, saying, "I've had a happy life," a word which his bluster and acrimony of many years contradicted over and over again, and yet a right and true word at last.

"They say truth sits upon the lips of dying men." Hazlitt had the capacity for enjoying, which at heart is the capacity for perceiving. He saw so much,

thought so widely and well, had such an incommunicable faculty for pouring out, in easy, gracious felicity, those things on which his mind had pondered and his eyes had lit, as fill the reader's mind with genuine and continuous surprise. Neglect, praise, blame, can not touch Hazlitt now. They touched him then, pricked him as with an ox-goad, snarled him as by the hands of fate, rejoiced him as meeting with a dear friend such as Charles Lamb was to him. But no one who wishes acquaintance with a copious spirit and a natural and exuberant intelligence, singularly gifted with captivating speech, should fail to read Hazlitt. He was betimes hot-blooded as Harry Hotspur, bellicose as Walter Savage Landor, but never coldly skept-

tical like Montaigne, nor other than heartening. He is genial betimes as Lowell, and says things that glitter like Emerson's sayings, and in moods is surprisingly profound as Bacon, though this is with him temporary and with Bacon customary.

He loved many things. Nature was dear to him above the measure of his time. Solitude delighted him. Poetry feasted his spirit. Noble thoughts stirred him as a battle-bugle does a sleeping soldier. He had the art of catching the hues of men, places, events, and intellectual eras. Doubtless his early efforts to become a painter, and his more than reasonable success in painting portraits, is explanatory in part of this qualification; but he had it, and

that is the genius of an essay,—to get the hue of a journey, or great character, or great poem. This, I would say, was his nonpareil qualification as critic of Shakespeare characters. To me he is the most stimulating Shakespearean interpreter save Coleridge only. His sayings are pregnant. We feel their appositeness, and rejoice in the vision it affords. Saintsbury considers him “the greatest critic that England has produced;” and Garnett thinks “as an essayist, he is even more effective than as a critic;” though, as for that, we readers of Hazlitt have little care in what department of writing he is greatest, seeing all his writings are essays and are pabulum for our enjoyment.

A lengthy study of this writer would

not suffice to bring his treasures to the light, much less so brief a study as this. This essay may serve to assert a fact and point to a genius. A finger-board need not be elaborate in directions. The finger does the work. To get readers to knock at Hazlitt's door is the purpose here avowed.

Hazlitt has the quality of making a reader feel at home. You feel like taking off your things to stay. He is not on a pedestal, but, like a genial host, at the door, or walks forgetful of your presence, talking to himself in most inimitable spirits. His thoughts jostle each other. He breeds thinking. He gives your brain a jog. He plays with ideas as his "Indian Jugglers" do with balls (read the essay). His notion of great-

ness is "great results springing from great inherent energies." In power to provoke thought, in range of theme, in naturalness of style, in comprehension of statesmen, orators, people, poets, Hazlitt has measured up to this definition.

He abandons himself to the hour. He gets the atmosphere, the aroma. For proof of this, read that perfectly delightful essay, "On Going on a Journey." Hear him say: "Give me the clear blue sky over my head and the green turf under my feet, a winding road before me and a three hours' march to my dinner, and then to thinking! It is hard if I can not start some game on these lonely heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. . . . Is

not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart, set in its coat of emerald? . . . One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone. I can not see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country." Aye, but would I not like to see the way he takes, and, out of his sight, walk after him?

How stately he can be as in the "Introduction to the Dramatic Literature of Elizabeth," which is noble as the theme! How appreciative and tender

as with reminiscence is his "My First Acquaintance with Poets!" How legitimately severe is he in "The Dandy School!" How wise and fatherly in his "Conduct of Life!" How penetrative in Lear, and Macbeth, and Burke, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Johnson, and Scott! How quiet and chaste, yet undisturbed, in "On the Fear of Death!" How acrid, yet justly so, his essay on "People with One Idea!"

But have done. Time wastes. Read this man, and find a fund of sagacious observations, wide thinking, and high thinking, multitudinousness of idea, captivating utterance, piquancy of saying and seeing, wide journeys among the big folks of the earth, and all he says touched with his person, just as a home

is filled with the gracious personality of the woman who loves it and lives there. Read Hazlitt, and you will bless the man who pointed to the path leading down to his door.

THE MOST INTERESTING BOOK IN THE WORLD.

THE Bible is that book. And this is not said because we are Christians, and so love the Bible. This is not a lover's pronouncement. This is a critical estimate. We are apt to think of the Bible, as a schoolboy of his text-book, as a thing to be studied because its contents are valuable and necessary to make one wise. The Bible is a book of wisdom and a book of joy, and a fountain of pure water, where the world may drink nor lessen by a drop the flowing stream. The Bible is a book of holy utility. It is big with maxims for a wise and holy conduct. It has green pastures, where

men loved of the Lord are shepherded, and wide streams where the shadows lie asleep, so still the flood is, by the which we may lie down in holy comfort and fall fast asleep. All this is true. The Savior's voice is here, with all his solemn warnings touched with love. And to us who love him, the Elder Brother's voice is music sweet, and sanctifies the book and temple holding it.

But at this moment our inquiry is not the lover's, but the man's. What book is biggest with interest? What has the unparalleled table of contents? the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Ænead, the Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Pascal's Pensees, Plato's Dialogues, Aristotle's Ethics, Walter Savage Landor's Imaginary Conversations, Sully's Memoirs,

Amiel's Journal, Rousseau's Confessions, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Newton's *Principia*, Demosthenes' *De Corona*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Burke, Webster's Works, *The Ring and the Book*, *In Memoriam*, *Faust*, *Les Misérables*, Cicero's *De Amicitia*, Thucydides, *Prometheus Bound*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Areopagitica*, *The Federalist*, the *Koran*,—which one of these is the most interesting book in the world? The answer is, "No one of them." Not that they lack interest. They are compelling books. Not one of all the catalogue which is not wealth to man or nation. They are, however, comparatives, not superlatives. In the quality of simple

human interest, as well as the quality of Divine importance, the Bible is the chiefest book. It has no partner.

The Bible is variegated. All sorts of literature are in it. Eloquence, biography, letters, geography, poetry, lyric and dramatic, inimitable incidents, kaleidoscopic changes, battle history, slavery, emancipations of peoples, destruction of nations, emigration of a race, the full-face view of the greatest empire of the ancient world, a road that walks across the track of every great kingdom of history to the date of Rome,—why, the Bible is the thrilling book. The pageant of spring, summer, winter, and autumn, or of night and day, are not so rapid, engaging, enthralling. The tale told by the ancient mariner is dull com-

pared with this Bible narrative. It is a swift procession of tremendous incident. The Napoleonic campaigns did not furnish a field so alive with incident, splendor, audacity, defeat, and triumph. Have we viewed the Bible in this light?

Call a roll of the books; or name them chapters of a volume, if you will. Genesis is the only manly attempt to give a history of the beginnings of things. I have read the Greek and Indic cosmogonies, and profess to find them cheap and frivolous when set beside Genesis. That they contain scattered and brilliant suggestions I do not deny. That these efforts, however futile, are to the credit of the philosophical imagination, is duly apparent. That Plato's efforts to get at the ancestry of

souls is brilliant as the play of the boreal lights needs no argument. But they are all patchwork. They seem playthings built for amusement. I catch the creative music in Genesis only. There I feel God, and hear him at his work. I see him fitting the rafters that uphold the sky, and shaping the stars, and setting their lamps ablaze. I find him hollowing out the basin of the seas, and bidding the mountains stand upon their feet and front the dawn. I see him tightening the girdle of the earth, and bidding it run tireless till he bid it rest. I hear the goings forth of the morning sing, and watch the angels of dawn pull the black curtains of the night to let the sunlight out. Genesis is august. God and angel and man and the framing of

the world are there. For these thousands of years, now, that saying, "Let there be light, and there was light," has been allowed to be the sublimest saying of the world, unless we are to accord that lofty throne to this, "I am the resurrection and the life." But they are in any case twin majesties. They have no fellows.

And Genesis contains the history of Abraham, who is one of the great personalities of all time; and the beginnings of the Jew, who is the miracle among nationalities. The beginnings of peoples as nations is in the tenth of Genesis. The Pentateuch contains that strange, great spirit, Moses, whose biography has always challenged the thoughtful wonder of the world.

Joshua is a battle program, fitted to stand beside Cæsar's Commentaries; and, to my reading, it is by long degrees more fascinating. There is no battle history like it. Battles and marches sound through it from prologue to epilogue. The Book of Ruth is a pastoral sweet as "The Vicar of Wakefield" or "Lorna Doone." The story of David is by every test more interesting than the "Odyssey." David thrills us as Ulysses knows not how to do. Isaiah is lordly like Milton, and beyond him. His harp makes music unapproachable for grandeur. Even dainty-fingered Matthew Arnold allowed this, and set literature journeying through this book.

Jeremiah is tender as Mrs. Browning's "The Cry of the Children," and

full of heartache as "In Memoriam." Ezekiel is imaginative as Dante and beyond him. Jonah is the broadest catholicity emanating from a book written so long ago. The four Gospels are each biographies, which, for compression, lucidity, fineness of touch, vividness of portraiture, naturalness and ease of style, the absence of explanation or exclamation in the face of shoreless wonders, make all biographies appear weak. The Gospel of John is a solitary among the books of earth; and the first fourteen verses are the sublimest strain of equal length in any literature. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is revolutionary as no book you can call to mind, and his Philemon is a more touching and beautiful tribute to friendship than Cicero's

“De Amicitia.” Revelation is splendid enough to put all the sky in conflagration.

Besides this, the New Testament contains the vestiges of the greatest figure born of the Jewish race,—Saul of Tarsus, whose stature the centuries do nothing other than increase. The Corinthian chapter on Love is companion to the Corinthian chapter on Resurrection, and the two are bereft of any companions always. You can not approach them in theme or treatment. Paul’s eloquence is beyond all others, because his theme outtops all themes whatsoever, “as the heavens are higher than the earth.” The introductory chapter to Philippians is an evangel glorious enough to make daylight of the darkest night.

Properly *the interest* of the Bible has been left till this last. *Christ* is in the Bible. The Old Testament looked toward him; and the New Testament looks him full in the face. His words have swept the clouds from out the sky, so that we see the far and shining sea; and his doctrines have changed the history of the world; and his doings have taught the centuries to love each other; and he walked calmly down into the grave to kill the king of death; and “having taken captivity captive, and having given gifts unto men,” he as calmly walked up through the spring-time sky and sat down “far above all principality and power, and holds a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should

bow, of things in heaven and things in earth;" and of whose heaven it is said that there is no night there, because the Lamb is the light thereof.

And this amazing story of this amazing Christ is told in the Bible; so that, for his sake alone, it is unapproachable for interest among the volumes of the world.

THE HIGH RESOLVE.

FAILURE in life does not occur because of purpose to fail. Nobody deliberately sets himself to be a shipwreck. In Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea," Captain Sabin wrecks his ship so as to make for himself gain in gold; but the ship was not his. He was only sailing-master. No single thing touching behavior needs more deliberate and steadfast emphasis than that failure arises not from a purpose to fail, but from a lack of purpose to succeed. No purpose is malign purpose. The tides do not chance to drift us into courage, vigor, sagacity. We are not driftwood; we are

boats managed with sail and oar. The oarsman does not make speed because the tide flows his way, but because he outmuscles the tide. Tides he can not govern, the boat he can. We are built to manage sails and seas. Our fashioning is with reference to conquest. The battle lies not so much in the sword as in the swordsman. In his poem "Opportunity," Edward Rowland Sill has hacked this into our thought in soldier fashion.

'This I beheld or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's
 banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed
 by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,

And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener
steel,—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—
but this
Blunt thing!'—he snapt and flung it from
his hand,
And lowering, crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore
bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-
shout
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down
And saved a great cause that heroic day."

Than this nothing is truer. The battle is in our hands, but not if we are purposeless. To be purposeless is to be poisonous. In dealing with men and women for years, my observation is that purposelessness is at the root of the multitudinous failures. Men thought that if they held aloof from bad purpose

they were virtuous, not being able to be persuaded that virtue is not colorless. Virtue is dyed crimson with blood. Christ sweat blood or ever he shed blood; but blood was, with him and with us, the purchase price of destiny-making deeds. If a body says, "I did n't mean to be dishonest," the rejoinder fit for the occasion is, "Did you mean to be honest?" Figures will not multiply unless some one use them in the arithmetic of multiplication. Virtue will not succeed till it have the affirmative courage of the soul.

Be it observed, I am not speaking of business success. I am not talking on that point now. It lies aside from the path my feet take now; although I hold it to be the honorable obligation of any

man engaged in business to succeed and grow rich if he may, and so justify God in his prosperity by using his riches for the enrichment of society, and not for the moral impoverishment of himself. But success is here considered in relation to character. To succeed is to get to be like God. Anything this side of that is failure, pitiful, crestfallen, complete. Napoleon was a vast success as a soldier, but a tedious failure as a man; and God is marking, not the soldier, but the man. Queen Elizabeth was a spectacular success as a sovereign, but a tragic failure as a woman; and womanhood is a rarer achievement than queenhood.

The contention here is, that positive, persistent purpose, an aggressive desire

is the necessity of goodness. We are not stumbling into goodness, but into badness. Strange as this is, it is all truth. We might stumble into hell, but could not stumble into heaven. We slip down to hell, but we climb up to heaven. The wizen purpose, then, is the chief criminal, though he can never be arraigned by any judge. The meaning to do good, if good be convenient to be done, makes no man good. We parley with evil, so we give the under hold to the wrestler named the devil. In "The Ebb Tide" (a book I counsel all youths to read), this distinction is wrought out into the horrible tangle of tragedy. Robert Herrick was not malignant. He had no vices. He planned no infamies, and he planned no granite virtue; and,

because of this failure, drifted out with the tides as the sea-weeds do, and concluded by being a rag, and not a man.

The woman who purposes to be chaste while she lives, who keeps in her heart the music of prayer, who finds God more neighborly than any friend, who plans to present a spotless life to God on every day and to do good whatever wicked winds prevail,—that woman will wear beauty for a crown. She finds conscience to be, not a lash, but a staff. The commandments do not make her sorrow, but make her sing. She finds “His commandments are not grievous.” Her life is not starched like laundry goods, but grown strong like the oak. The man who is good, and does good, is not to be accounted a man

who took to goodness as ducks to a stream, but is, as experience goes, to be accounted a man who meant to keep his heart with all diligence, meant to keep clear of sloth, greed, dishonor, meant to be not lewd, but holy; meant to be temperate; meant to be church-going; meant to "avoid the very appearance of evil;" meant to be God's gentleman. Gladstone did not happen to be a clean premier, nor McKinley a spotless statesman. These world-men meant to be politicians above reproach; and so they were. Men they were with the dust of many political tasks on their garments, but so clean, so pure, you might have mistaken them for saints.

In the Gettysburg Address—that flower of modern eloquence—Lincoln

said, "We here highly resolve." That has the music of the ocean and the tonic of the sea. And Lowell shall join his voice to this organ-music:

"Grandly begin! Though thou have time
But for one deed, be that sublime.
Not failure, but low aim, is crime."

To "highly resolve" is to run toward conquest as soldiers do.



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